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Letter dated 15 March 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

We would like to bring to the attention of the members of the Security Council the joint declaration by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of France, Mr. de Villepin, the Russian Federation, Mr. Ivanov, and Germany, Mr. Fischer, adopted on 15 March 2003 (see annex).

We should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

On behalf of the Permanent Representatives of France, Ambassador de la Sablière, and the Russian Federation, Ambassador Lavrov

(*Signed*) Gunter **Pleuger**
Permanent Representative of Germany

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Annex to the letter dated 15 March 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: French and Russian]

Joint declaration of 15 March 2003

The shared goal of the international community is the disarmament of Iraq pursuant to the decisions of the United Nations Security Council. Security Council resolution 1441 (2002), adopted unanimously, provides for an unprecedented inspections regime.

We reaffirm that nothing in the current circumstances justifies abandoning the inspections process or resorting to force.

The successive reports of Mr. Hans Blix and Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei have shown that the inspections are producing results. The disarmament of Iraq has begun, and there is every reason to believe that it can be completed rapidly and in accordance with the rules set out by the Council. Iraq, for its part, must cooperate actively and unconditionally.

France, Germany and the Russian Federation, supported by China, have submitted proposals for achieving that objective by defining key disarmament tasks and establishing a rigorous timetable.

Suggestions in the same spirit have been put forward by other members of the Council. The unity of the Council can be preserved on the basis of these efforts, in accordance with the principles established by resolution 1441 (2002). All members of the Council bear a particular responsibility for ensuring that it is not divided at this crucial time.

The programme of work of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) is to be submitted to the Council on Tuesday. We propose that the Council should then meet at the ministerial level to approve key disarmament tasks and establish an implementation timetable which is both demanding and realistic.

The use of force can be only a last resort. A peaceful approach is preferred by the Security Council and supported by the vast majority of the international community; we solemnly appeal to all members of the Council to make every effort to ensure that such an approach prevails.